

Communication Studies 464
Race, Ethnicity, and Media – Winter, 2001
Dr. Lorna Roth
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Tuesday 1:15 – 4:00 p.m.
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Issues of race and ethnicity have become focal points for current debates in public cultural expression and media studies. This course will address the following themes: cultural/racial difference and its implications for media studies; "white" is a colour, too; history of the notion of the "savage;" images and sounds of "otherness" - the (mis) representation of multicultural and multiracial minorities in mainstream and alternative media, including print, radio, television, film; heated debates around questions of access to arts and other cultural funding as exemplified by the recent Canada Council controversy about cultural and racial diversity guidelines; the implications of employment equity legislation, programs, and guidelines for mediaworkers; and cross-cultural awareness programs vs. anti-racist training for media professionals. Theoretical readings which frame issues of cultural and racial representation will be an integral part of this course. Numerous media examples will be shown in an effort to deconstruct racial and ethnic imagery and voices.

Objectives of Course: To recognize the complexities of personal and mediated racisms/ethnicisms; to provide conceptual and affective tools to enable us to deconstruct and struggle against ideological (infra)structures supporting inferential and overt racisms; to recognize our own complicity in relations of power and dominance; and to reflect on mediated tools of intervention that will disrupt the silences and visual codes that enable racisms to exist organizationally and structurally in various societies and among a variety of social formations.

Course Texts

There is one book for this course, "Black Like Me" by John Howard Griffin (1960). It is available at Paragraphe Bookstore on the corner of President Kennedy St. and McGill College. It's quite close to McGill University's Roddick Gates. For the rest of the readings, relevant articles and documents have been placed in the Copy Centre on the second floor of the Central Building on the Loyola Campus. Periodically, a short article might be added to the reading list, if relevant. Please feel free to bring in exceptionally-good articles, books, video clips, sound bytes that you have found so that we can share your intellectual discoveries.

Criteria of Evaluation

1. Class Participation: 20% of Final Mark. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. Attendance is compulsory. If you miss more than 1 class, your participation mark will automatically decrease 2% for each day missed after the first, unless you have a VERY legitimate reason.

As part of your participation mark, I would like you to keep a weekly journal reflecting on your perceptions of visual representations or sound bytes which explicitly or inferentially position issues of race and ethnicity in the media. If you find a particularly powerful example, you can use some classtime (5 minutes) to show it to us and conduct a group discussion for a maximum of 10 minutes beyond this. In the discussion, you should talk about how this example fits into some of the conceptual work we have undertaken to date. If you prefer to keep your examples and reflections private, you can hand in your journal at the mid-term to share your ideas with Christiana and me. All students, whether they present orally or not, will be expected to hand in their journals at several points during the semester. (20% of final grade)

2. Oral Assignment: Debate - To be done in Pairs or Small Groups

Choose an example of a controversial issue in the media that has some racist/ethnicist implications. Examples might include: Ernst Zundel, clitorectomies in Canada, Sikhs wearing turbans in the RCMP, women wearing hijabs in the public school system, a native/non-native confrontation, etc... Review the ways in which the media covered the issue. Then, debate the responsibilities that the media have in assuring fair and accurate portrayal of the complex issues involved in the matters you have chosen to discuss. Tell us how the media could have covered the issues implied by the controversy so that, if possible, all of the cultural, racialized communities involved would have felt that their positions had been more sensitively respected. 30% of Final Mark. Breakdown: 10% proposal for debate. 10% - a one-page critical analysis of your position one week AFTER your debate; 10% will be a mark for your oral arguments and performance in the actual debate.

3. Written Assignment and/or Media Project with Written Component

Option A: A 10-page essay on any aspect of Race, Ethnicity, and Media which is derivative of the course materials and discussions. It must have both a theoretical and practical component and should demonstrate knowledge of the class readings. Your written paper must include an abstract, proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography, videography, etc. . . .

Option B: A final media project with an accompanying written component on any aspect of Race, Ethnicity, and Media that interests you and which is derivative of the course materials and discussions - to be negotiated with me on a case-by-case basis. Your written paper must demonstrate some theoretical comprehension and must include an abstract, references, bibliography, filmography, videography, etc. Maximum individual written component to accompany media project: 5 typed pages. 50% of Final Mark.

For both Option A & B, you will be required to submit a proposal to me to be sure you are on the right track. We'll talk about the exact details in class. Due Dates for Proposal: Early Date – February 13; Late Date February 27.

1. Class Participation: 20%
2. Pair or Group Presentation: 30%
3. Written Essay or Media Project with Written Component: 50%.

First Media Debate Date: JANUARY 30, 2001. These will continue weekly until all students have had a chance to present. Please indicate to me the week before your presentation what kind of media equipment you might need, so we can reserve it.

N.B: Please make a photocopy of your written assignments before you hand them in, just in case they become misplaced by accident: better safe than sorry.

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, and submitted on time. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED – YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN ONE WEEK'S EXTENSION. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative.

Please use a dark ribbon on your computer printers. I have a hard time seeing a weak print-out. Thanks.

Plagiarized work will result in a failed grade.

There is a writing assistance program available for Concordia University students, who might be experiencing writer's block, panic, or any other symptom of "normal" student life. It is not a remedial program. It is a program designed for anyone who just needs some advice on how to improve a paper or how to get started . . . for the last time, etc. The number for this service at Loyola is 848-3555. For the same service on the Sir George Williams campus, call 848-3545.

Course Readings:

Always come prepared to discuss the course readings as I conduct this class as a fully participatory seminar.

January 9.

Introductions. Overview of Course Materials and Expectations.

A video to stimulate your interest in REM issues: *Tarek Gerfal. The Friendly Terrorist – Stereotyping Arabs in Film.* Discussion in groups of key issues emergent from the video.

Please read the following keywords and concepts as part of your background material for the course. They will be brought up again and again in class. Use them as preliminary definitions and reflections and as a foundation for your own research. Be prepared to modify your interpretations of these concepts as you see them deployed in a variety of discourses with which you will become familiar.

- "Culture," "Discourse," "Rhetoric," "Ethnic," "Minority," "Race," and "Prejudice," "Stereotype/Stereotyping," from O'Sullivan, Tim et al. *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge Publications, 1994.

- Checklist for Monitoring the Media
- Formula for Propaganda; Profiles of Propagandists, Bias, and Point of View

January 16. Historical Reflections on "Savages."

Guest Lecturer – Christiana Abraham

Video: 'Couple in the Cage: a Guatimauri Odyssey' – Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Pena.

Background Reading:

- Gustav Jahoda. "The Relativity of Images" – Ch. 16, and "The Continuity of Images" – Ch. 17 in *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture*. Routledge, 1999, pp. 214 – 242.

January 23. The Hidden Ideology of Whiteness in Everyday Tools of Representation: The Example of the Crayola Crayon.

Background Reading:

- Richard Dyer. "The Matter of Whiteness," in *White*. New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 1 – 40.
- bell hooks. "artistic integrity: race and accountability," in *reel to reel: race, sex, and class at the movies*. New York: Routledge, Ch. 9.

January 30. On Whiteness and Blackness: Reflections on Racial Appropriation.

Background Reading:

- John Howard Griffin. *Black Like Me*. New York: Signet Press, 1962.

February 6. Looking White People in the Eye

Video: Between Two Worlds

Background Reading:

- Sherene H. Razack. "Introduction: Looking White People in the Eye," and "Conclusion: To Essentialize or Not to Essentialize: Is This the Question?" in *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 3 – 22; 157 – 170.

- Theresa Harlan. "Creating a Visual History: A Question of Ownership," in *Aperture*. No. 139. Summer, 1995. Pp. 20 – 32.

February 13. Working Through Ideology: Overt and Inferential Racisms

Video: *Colour Adjustment* – by Marlin Riggs.

Early Due Date for Final Paper/Project Proposal.

Background Reading:

- Stuart Hall. "The Whites of their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media," in Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson. *The Media Reader*. London: British Film Institute, 1990, pp. 7 - 23.

- Aniko Bodrogkozy. "Is This What You Mean by Color TV? Race, Gender, and Contested Meanings in NBC's Julia" in Lynne Spiegel and Denise Mann (eds.). *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992, pp. 143 - 167.

February 20. Study Week.

February 27. The Struggle Over Cultural and Racial Recognition.

Video: *The Colour of the Spot*.

Late Due Date for Submission of Final Paper/Project Proposal

Background Reading:

- Stephen Harold Riggins. "The Media Imperative: Ethnic Minority Survival in the Age of Mass Communications", in Riggins, S. (ed). *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective*. London: Sage Publications, 1992, p. 1 - 20.

- Ella Shohat/Robert Stam. "Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle Over Representation," in *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 178 – 219.

March 6. Depicting the Imagery of Racism: Inside & Outside the Media

Background Reading:

- Ward Churchill. *Fantasies of the Master Race: Categories of Stereotyping of American Indians in Film*. M. Annette Jaimes (ed.). *Fantasies of the Master Race*. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1992, pp. 231 - 241.
- Lorna Roth. "(de)Romancing the North: Reflections on Absences, Misrepresentations and Stereotypes of the Canadian North and its Peoples," in *Border/Lines* 36, pp. 36 -43.
- Gilman, Sander. Chapter 7. The Jewish Nose: Are Jews White? Or, The History of the Nose Job, pp. 169 - 193; Conclusion, pp. 235 - 243 in *The Jew's Body*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Video: Aboriginal Peoples Television Network Promotional Video

March 13. Challenging Racism in the Arts and in the Press

Background Reading:

- Carol Tator, Frances Henry, Winston Mattis. "Introduction" and "Concluding Reflections" in *Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies of Controversy and Conflict*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 3 - 17 and pp. 246 - 270.
- Michael Meadows. "People Power: Reporting or Racism?" In *Australian Journalism Review*, Vol. 9, Nos. 11 7 2, January-December, 1987, pp. 102 - 111.

March 20. Reflections on the Unlearning of Racisms.

Video from Australia: *Get Real (not for sure)*.

Background Reading:

- Audre Lorde. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. pp. 98 - 101.
- bell hooks. "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990, pp. 145 - 153.
- Gloria Anzaldúa. "Bridge, Drawbridge, Sandbar or Island: Lesbians-of-Color Hacienda Alianzas," in Lisa Albrecht and Rose M. Brewer (eds.). *Bridges of Power: Women's Multicultural Alliances*. Philadelphia, PA and Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1990, pp. 216 - 231.
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (with Sneja Gunew). "Questions of Multiculturalism," in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Sarah Harasym (ed.). *The Post-Colonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. New York: Routledge Press, 1990, p. 59 - 66.

March 27. Cultural Appropriation and Other Racial Issues in the Arts - The Case of Femme au Banane and Other Cross-cultural Slips.

Background Reading:

- Jay Ruby. "Speaking For, Speaking About, Speaking With, or Speaking Alongside: An Anthropological and Documentary Dilemma," in *Journal of Film and Video*. Nos. 1 & 2. Spring/Summer 1992.
- Canada Council. *Recommendations of the Advisory Committee to the Canada Council for Racial Equality in the Arts and The Response of the Canada Council*. Ottawa: The Canada Council, 1991.

April 3. Some Controversial Case Studies.

Early Due Date for Final Paper/Proposal

Background Reading:

- Carol Tator, Frances Henry, Winston Mattis. "Into the Heart of Africa" in *Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies of Controversy and Conflict*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 36 – 62.
- Carol Tator, Frances Henry, Winston Mattis. "The Writing Through Race Conference" in *Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies of Controversy and Conflict*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 86 – 110.
- Carol Tator, Frances Henry, Winston Mattis. "The Black/Dance Music Station" in *Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies of Controversy and Conflict*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 111 – 140.

April 10. Depicting Equity and Diversity

Late Due Date for Final Paper/Project

Video: Barbequeria (Warlpiri Media Association, Australia)

Background Reading:

- Ryan Takatsu and Gerry Atwell. *Cultural Equity: A Strategy for Diversity*. Film, Television and the Media Arts. Report prepared for Cultural Equity Group. Winnipeg. August, 1997.